

The Commoner.

WILLIAM J. BRYAN, EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR.

Vol. 4. No. 7.

Lincoln, Nebraska, March 4, 1904.

Whole No. 163.

A CLEVELAND PLATFORM

Mr. Cleveland has done the democratic party a favor "without intending it" or even knowing it. He has written an article on "The Democratic Opportunity" and published it in the Saturday Evening Post, a paper which makes no claim to being democratic.

The Sage of Princeton has for some seven years stood outside of the democratic party and tossed advice over the wall to his former associates, but it is not the purpose of this editorial to criticize his forwardness and presumption. Its aim is rather to put his advice into concrete form so that it can be understood by the "rank and file." He says: "Our fighting forces will respond listlessly and falteringly if summoned to a third defeat in a strange cause; but if they hear the rallying cry of true democracy they will gather for battle with old-time democratic enthusiasm and courage."

Not only does he want to return to the "old-time" democracy (the democracy exemplified by his administration), but he wants the platform to be clear and unambiguous. He says: "Our party has fearless, outspoken and heroic work to do. This is no time for cunning finesse, nor for the use of words that conceal intentions or carry a double meaning. The democratic party has a message to send to its followers and to the masses of the American people. Let that message be expressed in language easily understood, unconfused by evasion and untouched by the taint of jugglery."

The ex-president has at last said something that The Commoner can commend. His plea for an honest platform is in harmony with the editorials which have appeared in this paper. It will be remembered that The Commoner has not only urged the reorganizers to present a clear and definite platform, but it some two years ago offered the ex-president a reward of \$5 if he would write such a platform. As he steadfastly refuses to do so, The Commoner presents a Cleveland platform "unconfused by evasion and untouched by the taint of jugglery." It is based upon Mr. Cleveland's official conduct and if any supporter of Mr. Cleveland finds any "cunning finesse" in it, The Commoner will undertake to remove any "double meaning" that may appear in the rough draft herewith presented:

A CLEVELAND PLATFORM.

With the hope of arousing "old-time enthusiasm" by a return to "true democracy," we, the democrats who refused to support the ticket of our party in 1896 and 1900, yielding reluctantly to the popular demand for our leadership, modestly submit a plain statement of the conditions upon which we are willing to receive on probation those erring brethren who, under the influence of "political nostrums," were stupefied into adherence to the Chicago and Kansas City platforms, leaving to us the "heroic work" of monopolizing the sanity and good sense of the country and electing the republican candidates.

First—We believe that a platform has no binding force upon candidates after the election and we point with pride to the fact that our last democratic president ignored the platform

declaration in favor of "the coinage of both gold and silver without discrimination against either metal or charge for mintage" and forced through congress a financial bill identical with a bill introduced by a distinguished republican leader—John Sherman—a year before.

Second—We condemn the coinage of the seigniorage secured under a republican measure similar to one vetoed by President Cleveland and we are not discouraged because the evils predicted in the veto message did not follow.

Third—Having faith in the sanity, conservatism and patriotism of the Wall street financiers, we promise to obey them in all matters which concern them, and pledge our administration to use the patronage at its disposal to force the passage of any measure desired by Wall street, even to the extent of rewarding those who find it necessary to misrepresent their constituents in order to please the president. (For proof of our unwillingness to do this we respectfully refer to Mr. Cleveland's last administration.)

Fourth—If we can find an excuse for the issue of bonds we promise to give the financiers the first chance at them, and if a former law partner of the executive can be found to draw the contract we are in favor of selling the bonds considerably below what they are worth in the market.

Fifth—We are in favor of tariff reform to a limited extent, provided it does not interfere with "sound money," but we guarantee that our president will help any protectionist, however extreme, before he will allow bimetalism to be restored.

Sixth—We agree to keep on good enough terms with the trusts to collect as large a campaign fund as the republicans in order that we may bid against that party for the purchasable vote and we agree to keep faith with the trusts after the election to the end that their contributions may continue, but we are willing that our president shall follow Mr. Cleveland's example and at the close of a term of inactivity vociferate loudly against the trusts after his successor is elected.

Seventh—We, of course, sympathize with labor, but we shall not allow that sympathy to lead us into favoring any legislation which the wage-earners desire. Especially shall we oppose the abolishment of government by injunction, for what is the use of appointing corporation attorneys on the federal bench if the trial of laboring men is to be turned over to a jury.

Eighth—We are opposed to imperialism between campaigns. "No greater national fall from grace was ever known," as Mr. Cleveland says, "than the attempt to conquer and govern without pretense of their consent millions of resisting people," but we proclaim our willingness to watch it with as much unconcern as he did if we are compelled to choose between a gold-plated "fall from grace" and the maintenance of national righteousness on the double standard.

Ninth—We pledge our administration to find remunerative positions with the great corporations for such officials as demonstrate their worth-

iness by using their offices to advance the interests of corporations having business before the departments. We point with some degree of boastfulness to the fact that very few of our last democratic administration got left.

Tenth—We are so proud of the eminently respectable crowd, or, rather, group that joined us in the support of Palmer and Buckner in 1896 that we hesitate to open our doors to the rabble, but we can accommodate a few more than we have and promise to give a cordial welcome to a limited number of those who shrink from being known as republicans, but desire the government administered according to maxim now popular in the republican party, namely, equal rights to all who have not enough influence to secure special privileges.

Drawing the Fangs.

The Chicago Tribune draws a striking picture of the evils of the anti-toxin trust. The Tribune shows that the mortality among patients treated with anti-toxin by the Chicago health department is 6.44 per cent; that the mortality among patients who are not treated with anti-toxin is about 35 per cent. The Tribune says, "These are the facts which lend terror to an industrial, monopolistic conspiracy between commercialized manufacturers." Then the Tribune says:

"How can the fangs of this conspiracy be drawn? Only by the local production of anti-toxin under a non-commercial system. What is needed for the inauguration of such a system? Only the money for a laboratory and for a horse pasture. The laboratory having been built and the horse pasture having been opened, all running expenses could be met by the sale of the product at cost.

"Can it be possible that this enterprise is too vast for the citizens of Chicago?"

But is there not another way of "drawing the fangs of this conspiracy?" What about the law providing for the prosecution and imprisonment of those who thus conspire against the lives of men, women and children?

Is it possible that the criminal indictment is "too drastic a measure," as one republican has termed it, for the treatment of men, who out of pure greed would make it well-nigh impossible for physicians to obtain a remedy for a dread disease—a remedy which, according to the Tribune's figures, reduces the mortality from 35 per cent to 6.44 per cent.

The Tribune tells us that the Massachusetts state board of health manufactures at a cost of 20 cents a bottle anti-toxin for which the trust charges \$1.33. The Tribune says that the difference between 20 cents and \$1.33 is all profit to the trust, and declares that this profit is the product of an industrial conspiracy.

Is it possible that in the presence of such evils as these the American people must remain helpless, although there is upon our statute books a law providing for the imprisonment of men who engage in such conspiracy. It is clear that so long as we have men in authority who are either unwilling or afraid to avail themselves of the